A

SERMON

Preached at

SALTERS-HALL,

TO THE

SOCIETIES

FOR

Reformation of Manners,

May 16. 1698.

And now Printed at their *Request.*

By *DANIEL WILLIAMS.*

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TO THE

SOCIETIES

FOR THE

Reformation of Manners,

In the CITIES of

London and *Weſtminſter.*

WHEN Firſt deſired by You to Preach the Enſuing Sermon, my Compliance would have been more difficultly obtained, had I taken time to conſider, That it came within the Number of the Diſcourſes that were to be Printed at your Requeſt; yea, to be the laſt *of them.*

A Subject, exhauſted by Eleven Divines *of ſo great Name and Worth, can receive little Advantage by the ſucceeding Attempts of a Head ſo barren, and a Heart ſo cold as mine.*

HOWEVER, My Promiſe being given, I intreated His Aſſiſtance whoſe Cauſe I plead; and the Event I commit to Him.

IF I have inſiſted on any thing ſaid by Others (for it's ſcarce poſſible to avoid) its not borrowed from them; for I conſulted

none of the former Sermons *in preparing this.*

THE Medium *which runs through this Diſcourſe is very fit, I'm ſure, to inforce what is ſaid before, and notwithſtanding the Defects of my Management, I can ſay, I believe what I deliver, and approve heartily of your* Good Deſign, *and what's better urged by others to promote it.*

ITS Matter of deepeſt Sorrow, *When Villanies of all Sorts abound, When Men declare their Sins with* Sodoms *Inſolency, When our* Settlement *is thereby ſo expoſed, and a probable Safety from the awfulleſt* Woes, *is held by a Thred ſo tender as the Life of His Majeſty* King WILLIAM. *That yet ſome Perſons of Note require* other *Motives to eſpouſe this Work of Reformation: And many* Magiſtrates *ſhift off the execution of the Laws, tho the Oath of God be upon them.*

HOW rare is a Zealous Nehemiah? *Nay, Symptoms of our Condition were leſs dangerous, if all who ſerved at God's Altar admitted* Phineas *for a Pattern of Concernedneſs in reſiſting Sin as they are capable, tho he is not to be imitated in the manner of his Execution.*

BUT

The Preface.

BUT amidst great Causes of Fears and Lamentation, let's not ungratefully neglect to adore God's undeserved Goodness, that our Constitution retains so many good Laws against gross Enormities: The Parliament *hath made an* Address, *and the* King *pursuant thereto, published a* Proclamation, *so excellently acknowledging the dueness, necessity, and value of* Reformation, *with* Resolves *of promoting it to the utmost. It were very afflictive, as well as uncharitable, to think a stop could be made* here, *and the* execution *of the Laws suspended as formerly, for this would turn to the Nations* Reproach, *and be an Aggravation of its* Guilt, *by rendring the forecited Instances, a meer* Testimony *against future Neglects, and a cause of severer Judgments.*

NOR is it an inconsiderable Presage of Good, as well as a probable Means of England's *Amendment, that you have formed your selves into* Societies for the Reformation of Manners, *a Title becoming a* Christian Name, *an Enterprize alike owing to flagrant Zeal, and amazing Courage, an ordinary* Spirit *under common* Assistances, *had been overwhelmed with the very view of the strength of that Tide*

of

of uncontrouled Wickedneſs, *which was at firſt to be ſtem'd by ſo very few.*

HOW ſoon did Divinely inſpir'd Minds coaleſce *in this Undertaking?*—— *And eaſily made it evident, That there is no ſuch difference between Members of the* Eſtabliſhed Church, *and the* Diſſenters, *that will not be* overlook'd *by all Serious Perſons, when the undoubted Concernments of Chriſt and Practical Godlineſs are in danger.*

BY an Union founded on a Bottom, *and deſigned to* Ends *ſo truly* Chriſtian, *your* Numbers *were ſoon increaſed; Very many Magiſtrates and Perſons of* Eminent Figure *gave up themſelves to this Undertaking, fit* Rules *were adjuſted, and the ſtrange* Succeſſes *which encourag'd your early Attempts, do ſtill grow more and more amazing, being as much beyond the hopes of your* timerous friends, *as the expectations of* ſurprized Offendors, (*who as Such only, can be ill-willers to this Deſign*) *nay, Men* ſtrong in Faith, *are as in a Dream, to ſee the Work of* Reformation *advanced thus far in ſo ſhort a time; and induced to hope this to be the dawning of that Seaſon, wherein* Reforming Attempts *ſhall ſucceed to thoſe* higher *degrees of Purity*

rity which are propheſied of; altho awful Diſpenſations may ſhake the frame of things to introduce it.

BESIDES, it is no mean effect of your ſucceſsful Example, That Men of the ſame Temper in other Places in this Nation, are awakened to exert their United Strength in pleading the Cauſe of Chriſt *againſt* Profaneſs.

YEA Ireland, *as if bluſhing at engaging ſo late, when their Diſtreſs and Deliverance had been ſo aſtoniſhing—— Do even exceed your Fervour, and* Proteſtants *of every* Communion *in* Dublin, *account* Reformation *their greateſt Buſineſs.*

MAY not we hope that your influencing Preſident may in time extend to all other Proteſtant Countries; *that none called* Reformed, *as to their* Faith, *may wear the Reproach of neglecting a* Reformation *in their* Manners: *They owe the ſame Love to their Neighbour as you do, their* Municipal Laws *againſt Vice, are a Talent for which they are as accountable as you be for yours: Groſs Sins will be as dangerous to every Nation which has equal Light, as they be to* England, *and the Heart wherein a* Divine Principle *reigneth*

eth, will naturally *prompt to the same Zeal against Sin, as they shall hear to be now at Work in your* Societies.

BUT let the happy issue of your Undertaking be more or less extensive; Bless you the Merciful God for inclining *your Hearts to this Work, and giving you the present* Oportunity *to express your good Intentions, and not denying you such encouraging* Success.

BE Conscientious in observing the Directions *given you in the* Sermons *of all those* Ministers *invited to your assistance, and neglect not to apply their* Encouragements, *that you may be strong and faithful in what respecteth your own Duty in this glorious Attempt, so you will die in Peace in a* Review *of upright* Vigorous Endeavours *to* serve your Generation.

THAT this Discourse may among the rest, contribute somewhat to your good Designs, is the Prayer of,

Your Servant in the Gospel,

Daniel Williams.

ERRATA.

PAge 10. l. read is not, p. 24 l. ult. read πονηρῶ κεῖται. p. 30. in sheet C. l. *ult. read* disingenuous. p. 18. l. 19. in the 3d sheet, *read* their for *the*. The 3d Sheet is Folo'd as the 2d.

MATTH. xii. 30.

He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth abroad.

TO underſtand this Text in its aptneſs to excite your promoting *a Reformation of Manners*; we muſt conſider the occaſion of theſe Words, which you'll find in the foregoing Verſes, *v.* 22. Chriſt healed a Man poſſeſſed with a Devil, who had deprived him of both Sight and Speech. The Hand of that Enemy is ſometimes great in Bodily Diſeaſes, and when they come by his immediate Agency upon any Perſon delivered up by God to endure ſtatedly ſuch Effects of his Power; ſo far, and ſo long, that Perſon is ſaid to be *poſſeſſed* with the Devil, who is Commiſſioned thus to vex and hurt him. In this Condition the Man was

brought to Christ, who not only removed the Diseases, by restoring his Sight and Speech, which was a Cure; but therein he overcame the resisting Power of the Devil, and expell'd him; so that he could no longer have access to the Person as his own priviledged Place, to make him Blind and Dumb: which connotes the Devil's Agency in this Disease, and Christ's Conquest over him in his healing the Diseased Person. V. 23. *And all the People were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of* David? This Miracle filling them with amazement, induceth them to receive Christ as the promised *Messias*: *q. d.* Who should he be, but *that Rod out of the Stem of* Jesse? Prophesied of *Isa.* 11. 1. 10. *Matth.* 21. 6. Could any below him perform what we have seen and heard? What more Miraculous can the *Messias* do? The Power of God would never work such a Miracle to favour an Impostor; and no Power below what's Divine, could possibly effect it: And seeing his Doctrine agrees with the Old Testament; and these his Works are so plain a Testimony of the Spirit to his being sent of God, he

he muſt be what he declares himſelf, *viz. The promiſed Chriſt.*

THE *Phariſees* not able to deny the Fact, attempt to enervate the Inference the People made therefrom. V. 24. *But when the Phariſees heard it, they ſaid, this Fellow doth not caſt out Devils, but by* Beelzebub *the Prince of Devils: q. d.* We grant there is a power more than Humane, in what this Man hath performed before you, but it's a Diabolical Power this Work is owing to; and it's to ſerve the Purpoſes of the Devils, and under the Conduct of their Prince, that this Contemptible Man, unworthy of any Name, is employed even in what you are ſo amazed at. Therefore inſtead of thinking him to be the *Meſſias*, you ought to conclude him a grand Impoſtor, and reject him as ſuch, and the more for theſe Infernal Aſſiſtances you ſee afforded to him.

THIS was a Concluſion too malicious for an Apology from meer Ignorance, which with what our Lord applieth to theſe Men, *V.* 31. 32. gives a probable Reaſon to conclude, That the *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt* is a wilful

aſcribing to the power of the Devil, thoſe evident Miracles wrought by the Holy Ghoſt in Teſtimony to *Jeſus* being the Meſſias, that ſo it might be concluded, Jeſus was not the Chriſt, but an Impoſtor.

IT'S no wonder, that it's impoſſible to bring ſuch as commit this Sin to Repentance, and conſequently to obtain Pardon, becauſe they hereby deprive themſelves of the advantage of Miracles to ſubdue their Unbelief; yea, they employ them to harden themſelves in Infidelity againſt him, *who is exalted to give Repentance*, and deliver the Will of God to Mankind.

OUR Lord Jeſus anſwers this wretched Aſſertion, by detecting its Weakneſs, Falſhood, and Impoſſibility, and thereby juſtifies the Peoples Concluſion from *v.* 25. to 29. Not to mention his Reaſoning, *v.* 27. from their Childrens Practice, the principal Argument is thus drawn *ab impoſſibili*.

SATAN muſt be a deſigningly wilful Deſtroyer of his own Kingdom, if Chriſt did caſt out Devils under his Conduct, and by his Virtue, which was

a thing of which Satan who was such a Self-lover, and had so great a Reach, could not possibly be guilty. No, the Devil is too wise not to understand his Interest better than thus, especially in a Case so obvious, and so nearly concerning himself.

OUR Saviour to clear the force of this Argument, declareth,

1. THAT God and the Devil have two very distinct Kingdoms, which are Constituted, Ruled, Supported, and Propagated by Ways, and in a manner extremely different, V. 26. *If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then can his Kingdom stand?* Here is one Kingdom, *viz.* the Devils, *v.* 28. *But if I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come among you:* This is the other Kingdom, *viz.* God's Kingdom.

2. THERE is in this World so fixed a War between these two Kingdoms, that the one grows upon the others Ruines.

3. THE way of Christ, and the Tendency of his Doctrine, and scope of all his Attempts, were utterly to overthrow Satan's Kingdom, and advance the Kingdom of God.

4. SATAN's Kingdom was effectually weakned, and the Kingdom of God advanced, and enlarged by all that power which Christ had put forth in this and all other Miracles.

5. WHATEVER Christ did contribute by his exerted Power to the Destruction of Satan's Kingdom, was in a way of force and violence upon Satan, and not with his Consent.

ALL these things are implied in *v.* 26. 28. and most expresly *v.* 29. *Or else how can one enter into a strong Man's House, and spoil his Goods, except he first bind the strong Man, and then he will spoil his House.* The Sum of Christ's Plea is this, it's impossible the Devil who is a Being so sagacious and experienc'd, should wittingly help me to offer violence to himself, and thereby enable me to force him out of his Throne, rescue the Prey out of his Jaws, pluck down what he hath so studiously erected, defeat his chief design, and advance God's Throne and Interest, upon the obstructing whereof Satan is constantly and maliciously intent. These are things so inconsistent, that without inveterate Malice they cannot

not be ſurmized. Nay, I am ſo far from working Miracles by the power of *Beelzebub*, that it muſt be evident to every unprejudic'd Perſon, they are wrought by the Power of God, in whoſe intereſt I am ſo entirely engaged, and which I hereby ſubſerve.

HAVING given you this account of the Matter our Bleſſed Saviour is treating of, I ſhall conſider the Text; *He that is not with me, is againſt me, and he that gathereth not with me, ſcattereth abroad.* Herein ſeveral things ſeem deſigned.

1. AN inforcement of the forecited Argument. *q. d.* Satan is ſo far from concurring with me in my deſign, or yielding me aſſiſtance by his Power, that he would employ his Skill to ſupport what I am caſting down, he would neglect no Method to pull down what I am building up: And inſtead of favouring my Attempt, his Power would be engaged againſt it; the utmoſt Strength poſſeſſed by him, he would be ſure to exert, to obſtruct Mens Faith in me, and not to induce them to believe; he would prove me an Impoſtor, inſtead of teſting my Commiſſion. Who then can

ſurmize that my Miracles are wrought by any virtue derived from him? *Seeing he muſt be againſt me, if he be not for me.*

2. ANOTHER thing deſigned is to aſſert, That the Lord Jeſus is the Head of God's Kingdom in its preſent Oeconomy.

THIS is evidenced by the alteration of the Terms; for in a ſtrict connexion with the foregoing Paſſages, the Words would run thus; He that is not with God's *Kingdom*, is againſt God's Kingdom. But inſtead thereof, they are, *He that is not with me*, (the Chriſt) *is againſt me*; to denote, that the Adminiſtration of God's Kingdom is committed to Chriſt God-Man the Mediator. *q. d.* Legiſlation, Dominion, Judgment, the Care and Diſpoſal of all Perſons and Things which appertain to the Divine Kingdom in this World, I am entruſted with; to me they belong: *The Government is upon my Shoulders*, Iſa. 9. 6. I am *the King*, Zech. 9. 9. and the Intereſt of the Deity among Mankind, is lodged in my Hands; and therefore Mens adherence to God's Kingdom, is determined by their adherence to me,

to

to whom the Authority therein is delegated.

CHRIST conſidered abſtractedly as God, is of the ſame Eſſence with the Father, and ſo originally poſſeſſed the Kingdom of God as Creator, in the ſame very reſpects as the Father did; he had the ſame abſolute Royal Dominion, and Rectoral Authority was eſſential to him without a Delegation.

BUT to Chriſt as *Mediator*, this Kingdom which refers eſpecially to the Recovery of Fallen Men, and the Government of them as redeemed, is given as a Reward: Joh. 13. 3. *Jeſus knowing that the Father had put all things into his Hands.* Joh. 5. 22. 27. *For the Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son: And hath given him Authority alſo to execute Judgment, becauſe he is the Son of Man.* Matth. 28. 18. *All power is given me in Heaven and Earth.*

THIS is that *Kingdom* which was erected to reduce Apoſtates to a ſubjection to God, againſt whom they had rebelled; this as Wiſely, Juſtly, Faithfully, and Perfectly adminiſtred by Chriſt, ſhall be delivered up after all

Men

Men have been Tryed at this Redeemer's Bar, and the Equity of his Procedure is solemnly vindicated, 1 *Cor.* 15. 24. 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 7, 8, 9, 10.

A due Conſideration of this Kingdom, as in Chriſt's Hands, and as it is his Kingdom, would evince *his Divinity*, as well as his Mediatorial Adminiſtration: For were not he truly God, he could not know, and influence ſo many Minds; Direct, Inſpire, Uphold, Defend, Reſtrain, Succeed and Accommodate ſuch a Multitude of Perſons, in ſuch variety of Exigencies, at the ſame time, in different Places, and judge the Secrets of all Men at laſt.

IT would alſo force Mens acknowledgment of a *Goſpel Law*, without which the Notion of a Goſpel Kingdom would be in many reſpects incongruous; and a judicial proceeding upon Sinners, as Believers, or Unbelievers, Penitent, or Impenitent, were impoſſible: For by the Law of Innocency, the Penitent believing Sinner would be as infallibly condemned, as he who is a believing Penitent.

NEITHER

NEITHER would it be ſuch a difficulty to comprehend how an Obedience ſhort of legal Perfection, is acceptable at a Redeemer's Bar, as a Condition of a Sinner's poſſeſſing the Effects of that Redeemer's Righteouſneſs; for his Righteouſneſs being the ſole meriting cauſe of thoſe beneficial Effects, the *Impetration* of them is confined to his Obedience, which was more than adæquate to the Law of Innocency; and ſo there is no room left for our meriting by our Obedience to the Goſpel, which is the Rule by which Chriſt only *applieth* the Bleſſings purchaſed by himſelf: But yet if that Goſpel do not entitle us to thoſe Bleſſings upon our compliance with the Conditions whereupon it offered them to all Sinners, and exclude not them who refuſe to comply; then Chriſt's Goſpel Kingdom is a meer *Phyſical* Kingdom, wherein Benefits are no Motives to Duty, nor Danger a Diſſuaſive from Sin. Goſpel Pleadings, Perſwaſions, and Authority, have no more place with, and are as improper to them, as to the raging Sea, or hardeſt Stones; the influence of Conſideration is totally excluded, and

ſome

ſome are haled to Heaven by meer external Power, without any regard to their voluntary ſubjection to the Goſpel; and others thruſt into Hell, without any reſpect to their wilful refuſing of the Remedy, and ſelf-hardening againſt repeated Calls, and the Grace offered by the Redeemer. Such thoughts could ſcarce be conceived poſſible to one who ever read the Holy Scriptures, unleſs an occaſional obſcure Paſſage muſt govern againſt the whole and plain ſcope of the *Bible*; where a Rectoral Adminiſtration towards fallen Man in order to his Recovery, is ſo conſtantly expreſſed, and our Saviour is found deſignedly to call this ſo very often by the Name *Kingdom*.

SHOULD any Sinner *object*, If I ſhould be caſt into Hell from under the Goſpel, I ſhall be ſo dealt with becauſe the Curſe of the Law of Innocency lies againſt me only as a Fallen Sinner. *I anſwer*, That Sentence took hold of you as Fallen Sinners; but with that, there ſhall be a *ſorer Deſtruction* for refuſing Chriſt, and rejecting the Mercy of God, which offered you a Freedom from that

firſt

first Condemnation: And that very offer of Deliverance upon Goſpel Terms, the earneſt Pleadings of Chriſt with you to accept it, his Complaints of your refuſal, his Threatnings of ſorer Puniſhments to excite your Minds, his laying your continued and aggravated Ruine upon your wilful Diſobedience, and for that as Judge Condemning you at laſt as unrelieved, do fully demonſtrate, that Chriſt's Goſpel Kingdom is a Rectoral Conſtitution adapted to Subjects capable of Moral Government, notwithſtanding your Apoſtacy; and that by theſe Methods joyned with his aſſiſting Grace, he was treating with you *as ſuch*, in order to your Salvation.

2. A third thing deſigned by the Text, is a diſtribution of all Perſons into Abettors of, and Contenders for Chriſt's Kingdom on the one ſide, or the Devil's Kingdom on the other. *q. d.* All are with me, or againſt me, as the Head of the Goſpel Kingdom; and he that is not for me, is againſt me, and for my Competitors: They who gather not with me, *i. e.* they who do not under my Conduct aſſiſt and propagate the Divine Inte-

Intereſt, which I am managing, ſuch ſcatter abroad, *i. e.* they oppoſe the Intereſt of God, and in conjunction with Satan they exalt his Dominion and Purpoſe. None are Neutrals, each is engaged and ſuitably employed.

FROM the Text in connexion with the foregoing Verſes; we have ground for theſe following Obſervations.

1 *Obſerv.* THERE are two Kingdoms, with their ſeveral Intereſts, in oppoſition and conteſt againſt each other in this lower World.

THE one is a Kingdom *of Light*, the other of *Darkneſs*; the one of *Truth*, the other of *Error*; the one adminiſtred by *Holy Laws*, the other by *Diabolical* and *Carnal* Maxims:——The one a Kingdom of *Love* and *Peace*, the other of *Enmity*, *Cruelty*, and *Diſcord*. The *Encouragements* in the one are Rational, Spiritual, and Heavenly; in the other, they are Vain, Senſual, and Earthly. As the one prevaileth, Men become Juſt, Kind, Temperate, Humble, Pious, Heavenly-minded, and adorned with every Grace; as the other obtaineth, Men become Unjuſt, Malignant, Intemperate, Proud,

Proud, Impious, Earthly-minded, void of every Grace, and Universally vitious. The voluntary *Subjects* of the one Kingdom, are Men Sober, Regular, Useful, Good, and truly Religious; the *Subjects* of the other are all either Wild, Irregular, Mischievous, as well as Unuseful, Bad, Idolatrous, Profane, or Irreligious: These Kingdoms, so extremely opposite, are in perpetual War, one growing upon the others decay, as the one prevaileth, the other loseth ground; Peace is impossible between them, yea, a Truce or Cessation cannot be admitted for a moment, tho the Struggles sometimes, and in some Places, are more visible than in other.

2 *Observ.* THE Rulers of these Contending Kingdoms and Interests, are Christ God-Man our *Mediator* on the one part, and the Devil consider'd Collectively as the Head of the Apostacy on the other part. The Lord Jesus in the Humane Nature opposeth Satan, and Invades the Territories he long possessed, and erects his Throne where his Seat had been.

THE

THE Devils ſeverally under whatever Conduct the Superiority in Order, Power, or Office among them doth adjuſt, do oppoſe Chriſt's Attempts, ſecure their own Conqueſts, defend the Degeneracy introduced by them, promote Man's Hoſtility againſt Heaven, cloſely guard their Priſoners, and recover whatever of their Image or Dominion Chriſt at any time impaireth. Satan is the Ruler, with whom Chriſt ſtands Competitor in every Age.

3 *Obſerv.* ALL Men are divided into two Parties by their adherence to theſe two *oppoſite* Rulers, in their reſpective Intereſts and Deſigns.

THE one Party is for Chriſt, and the *Purpoſes* he purſues; in this are included all *Good Men*, and whatever *good* they do, eſpecially of a Publick Nature: Theſe under the Conduct of Chriſt, advance what he is building up, and extirpate what he came to deſtroy; they Imbark with him, and fight under his Banner, from an Approbation of his Deſign as very agreeable to their own renewed Temper.

THE other Party includes all such who yield up themselves to Satan's Conduct, these have an *Aversion* to Christ and his Interest, from their own corrupt Nature, and no less a *Fondness* for those things he attempteth to destroy. By this their vile Disposition the Devil easily actuates their Faculties, and employs their Powers, and so they become his ready *Instruments*, tho they see not that its he employeth them.

4 *Observ.* ANY Man's *Neutrality* between these engaged Parties, and opposite Rulers and Designs, is altogether impossible.

EVERY Person is in the one Kingdom, or the other. By Nature all Men are in Satan's Interests, and under his Power, Eph. 2. 2. *He ruleth in the Children of Disobedience*: By Grace we are delivered from Satan's Power, *and translated into the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus*, Col. 1. 13. Christ by the Gospel inviteth and presseth all to side with him; but until they obey his Call, they *remain* in Satan's Kingdom, they continue on his side in this War, and hinder what they can the success of Christ's

Attempts, againſt the Devil's Uſurpation.

SOME pleaſe themſelves with a Conceit, that they are not of a Party with the Devil againſt Chriſt, tho they are conſcious they are not engaged on Chriſt's ſide.——But the Vanity of it is apparent from this, that their very *ſurmized Neutrality* is really their being a Party with Satan; for they were originally bound to be God's *Subjects*, becauſe they were his *Rational Creatures*, and tho by their Rebellion they forfeited the Immunities of his Kingdom, yet an obligation to continue his Subjects, ceaſed not thereby.

NAY further, Chriſt by his Merits having procured a Reſtoral of their forfeited *Priviledges*, if they will return; and offering his *Aſſiſtance* to enable them to return, he now claimeth their Allegiance, both as God's Creatures, and as his *own Redeemed*.

IF therefore after this Claim, Men ſhall *refuſe* to joyn actually with Chriſt, and to give up themſelves to him, muſt not every Man confeſs they continue in actual *Rebellion*? Keep they not

ſtill in the Enemies Camp, whilſt they Liſt not themſelves in Chriſt's Army?——Are they not there? However they *lag* or *hide*, 'till they come over to our Lord, whom God hath ſent to bring them back to him?

ALL of you therefore have reaſon to aſſure your ſelves, if you are not actually and explicitly *for* the Lord Jeſus, you are *againſt* him; yea, the Devil is your Leader, you and he have the ſame common Intereſt, and drive on the ſame Deſign. Theſe words, *He that is not with me, is againſt me*, prove what I ſay, and ſhould awaken us to deep thoughts when we neglect an explicite *Dedication* of our ſelves to Chriſt; and alſo whenever he hath any *Momentous* Concern in agitation in our Day.

5 *Obſerv.* IT'S in vain for any Man to *profeſs* to be on Chriſt's ſide, or *harmleſs* to his Concernments, if he do not in his place contribute his utmoſt to ſerve Chriſt in promoting his Intereſt, and purſuing the Deſigns he is carrying on againſt Satan's Kingdom in this World.

HE that gathereth not with Christ, ſcattereth abroad, and is not with him, but againſt him: By theſe words he determineth that they who are indeed with him, muſt be *active* in his Cauſe, for he will uſe their Service, tho he do not need it: They muſt gather with him, or he deems them to be his Enemies, and adjudgeth them *Obſtructors* of his Work, if they ſtatedly neglect to *contribute* to it, according to their Power.

NAY, in his account, if his Intereſt *grows* not by their Labour, they are Acceſſory to its *Detriment*; and they ſubſerve the Devil's Purpoſes, tho they *own* it not.

SOMEWHAT all Men are doing and purſuing as the ſcope of their Lives, which fails not to be *pernicious*, if it be not *profitable*.

IT is our Redeemer's Demand, that Men be entirely and heartily devoted to his Cauſe, which will not fail to command their *Time*, and employ their *Talents* in his Service. Idle Intentions and unactive Wiſhes, are not ſufficient Teſtimonies againſt Hypocriſie in their profeſſed Regards for him,

nor

nor fit Evidences that they are Sincere.

AND as vainly do Men hope to escape the *Odium* of being of a Party with the Devil, because they do not *professedly* abet his Cause, or to be unhurtful to Christ's Designs, if they make no direct and deliberate opposition thereto.

ALAS, you'll find your State will be determined by more *close and substantial* Indications. Our Lord who requir'd *Peter* to evidence the Truth of his Love to him *by feeding his Sheep*, Joh. 21. 16. expects our Discipleship shall be instanced in a *vigorous* advancement of his Conquests.

WE must not only cease to provoke him by our *own* Enormities, but we must help on the Reformation of *others*, we must *increase* his Kingdom, by lessening the number of Rebels; and *vindicate* it, by restraining Mens profligate Disobedience, as far as we are able.

THIS *is gathering with Christ*, which if we omit, we do one way or other promote Mens Rebellious Disobedience, *which is scattering abroad*; whereby we make Christ's Building more difficult,

and less probable, we make havock in his Heritage, pull down what he is so studious to erect; and disperse into the *open Wastes* (where Satan presides) those whom Christ is bringing into his own *Enclosures*.

THE Subject would require my Enlargement on each of these *Observations*— But one Discourse will not admit a prosecution even of this last to its full extent. Therefore I shall satisfie my self to have laid a Foundation for what may be most properly directed to your assistance; *as Societies attempting the Reformation of Manners, by putting the Laws in Execution against sundry open Immoralities.*

WHAT can *engage* you to, or *encourage* you in this Undertaking; yea, or oblige you to *Diligence* and accurate Circumspection in the prosecution thereof, like this? In this your Attempt you have *Christ* for your Head, and his *Kingdom* and designs to promote, and this in *opposition* to *Satan* and his *Kingdom*: Also, that to neglect it, would *state* you on *Satan's* side, and for his Interests, in *opposition* to *Christ*, and his Kingdom.

HOW forcible is any one of theſe *Conſiderations*? How much more all of them conjoyned? As indeed they be in favour of your Bleſſed Enterprize: And this I hope to evidence in the following *Propoſitions*, which are founded on what I have already ſpoken to, and will lead me to reaſſume, and improve thoſe Obſervations I more haſtily paſſed over.

1 *Prop.* THE *Reformation of the Manners of Mankind*, is a conſiderable part of the deſign of Chriſt, as Head of the Divine Kingdom in this World.

BY Reformation of Manners, conſidered as the adæquate deſign of Chriſt; I mean the turning of Men from Sin to Holineſs. This, I confeſs, is beyond a *Reſtraint* to ſuch flagitious open Enormities which limiteth your Undertaking.

AND therefore I ſhall ſay little of *Reformation*, but under a reſpect to ſuch *open Evils*. Our Lord finds the World groſly depraved——*Serving divers Luſts and Pleaſures*, Tit. 3. 3. The gratification and fulfilling of Carnal and Spiritual Luſts, make up the *Sordid Employment* of Apoſtate Sinners, and this oft in

open defiance of God's Authority. Some *are Mad upon their Idols*, Jer. 50. 38. Some are *Blaſpheming* the Sacred Name of God, from their Contempt of, and Enmity againſt him. Some profaning his *Sabbath* and *Worſhip*: Others deſtroying the Harmony of this Lower State, by violating the Laws of thoſe ſeveral *Relations* Men ſtand in to each other; ſome guilty of *Blood*, others of *Filthy Fornication, and Adulteries*, or *defrauding their Neighbours*, or *Lying*, *Slandering*, and the like.

The *prevalency* of ſuch Crimes argueth the *Devil's Empire*, and as far as they obtain *he Reigneth in any place*, Rev. 2. 13. But when theſe be *Reformed*, his *Seat* ſo far is overthrown, and the Kingdom of Chriſt gets ground.

To reform a World ſo corrupt, was very becoming a *Holy Jeſus*, but poſſible only to an *Almighty Saviour*, when *all that was in it is Luſt*, 1 Joh. 2. 16. and the *whole* of it is ſo eaſily, agreeably, and deeply *fixed* in Wickedneſs; yea, *in that wicked one*, who introduced, excites, and maintains this Corruption, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται, 1 Joh. 5. 19.

AMONG

AMONG other designs for the Glory of God, and the Benefit of the Creation, Jesus Christ resolveth the Reforming of Menkind; *He came to bless us, in turning every one of us from his Iniquity*, Act. 3. 26. For, well knowing Impunity would make no Man happy, whilest his Temper and Course of Life is wicked, he will *Bless us* by Reforming us; and to effect this, was a considerable part of his Errand; the same is attested 1 Joh. 3. 8. *For this Purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil, i. e.* Unrighteous Wicked Works; these *Devilish Bands* wherein *Satan* held Men, *Christ* came to unloose.

The Methods *Christ* took to reform the *World*, are greatly adapted to this end, as well as expressive of his *concernedness* to accomplish it; consider his GOSPEL, *That teacheth us to deny Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and to live Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this present World*, Tit. 2. 11, 12. And if you will examine this as the *Standard*, it will be found, that the highest profession of Religion with *a bad Life*, and the greatest

greateſt Pretences to Grace, where *Vices* are indulged; make up no more than a *dead Image*, and will prove no other than Damning *Hypocriſie*.

THE ſame Goſpel-light will convince you, that the Doctrinal *Opinions* which tend not at all to promote Practical Godlineſs, are but *vain Notions*; the moſt *plauſible Speculations* which obſtruct it, are deſtructive *Errors*; yea, the moſt *Orthodox* Conceptions which influence not to a Sober Behaviour, will eventually *increaſe* Mens Condemnation. Nor can any Man wiſely examine whether his Knowledge, Faith, or Love, be *ſaving*, or *not ſaving*, unleſs he try them by the Efficacy they have upon the ſcope of his *Practice*; for they will never prove Saving in that Man whom they fail to Reform.

OUR Bleſſed Lord did not only adapt his *Doctrine* to our *Reformation*, but he alſo *ſuffered Death* to remove the Obſtacles to it, and to *procure* the Spirits Operations for reſtoring the *Divine Image*, and turning Men from their wicked Courſe.

HE

HE ſpoiled the Devil of his Power to that Degree, that he cannot *compel* Men to Tranſgreſs, as otherwiſe he had been able.

WICKEDNESS he put to the Bluſh by his own Holy *Example*; and provided a *Barier* againſt it, by the Authority enſtamped on both *Magiſtracy* and *Miniſtry*.

NEED I add, his continuing (if not a new implanting) ſuch *Notices* and *Inſtincts* in Fallen Men, as render them *Shy*, *Aſham'd*, and *Afraid* of groſs wickedneſs, till they be *hardned* by Cuſtom; and even by this ſcarce ever brought ſo far, as not *ſecretly* to diſallow their own Vitious Courſes, and approve the contrary.

NOT to mention his *Providential Reſtraints*, and ſenſible Rebukes to flagitious Evils, nor his clear Explication of God's Laws; let us note how full and plain an Account he hath given us of *Heaven* and *Hell*, whereby Sin and Holineſs muſt be far enough from being Indifferent Matters to Immortal Souls; for as either of them do Govern, we ſhall be *Eternally* lodged in the

the *one* or *other* of those two places, *Rom.* 2. *v.* 7, 8, 9, 10.

AND for what is this, and the rest which our Lord hath done? But that *Profaneness* and *Immorality* may be *Expelled*, and true Religion, Justice, Truth, Love, Purity, and Temperance might *again* prevail, with an *Acknowledgement of himself as the great Means of all.* How happy will this Earth be, when his Kingdom *overcomes?* That is, when this designed *Reformation Universally prevaileth*——The Natural, as well as the Moral Effect of it will be a stop to the *Miseries*, and the Improvement of the *truest Welfare* of Mankind.

2 *Prop.* ALL they who promote the *Reformation of the Manners of Mankind*, are *so far* with Christ and his Kingdom, and against the Devil and his Kingdom.

THIS determineth whom they follow as their Leader, and what End they live to. Whenever you put a stop to Sin by Advice, Reproof, or *Restraints*, you are opposing what Christ came to destroy; and when you contribute to the Advancement of Piety and Virtue, you concur

concur with Christ in what his Heart is set on. You may say, *We are Workers together with Christ*, 2 Cor. 6. 1. and this in what he will own at last. Nor need you fear opposition therein from any besides the Devil, and such as he can influence: You fight under Christ's Conduct, and this is the truest Indication that you are his Subjects and *Followers*; yea, if you do it heartily, and for *right Ends*, it's an Infallible Evidence you are his Disciples in *Sincerity*. To *Proselyte* Men to a Party among *Christians*, will be found no such Testimony of your being for *Christ*, as this Faithful Endeavour to Reform Mens Ways.

3 *Prop.* Every Man in his proper Station ought to be for Christ, in promoting the *Reformation of others*. To take the Sense of this, you may observe the *extent* of the Obligation; it's *all Men*, each should do somewhat; the *Measure* and Limitation of Men's Attempts, that's to be *according to their proper Station*; the *kind* and *degrees* of Service in this Work, must be accommodated to your Abilities and Opportunities. Any *Neglect* is culpable, *utmost* Endeavours will be acceepted,

accepted, and *Order* must be maintained.

THIS is part of the Charge that accompanies every *Office* of Divine Appointment. *Magistrates* have their Power and Honour, with this affixed thereto, That *they be a Terrour to Evil Doers, and a Praise to them that do well*, Rom. 13. 3, 4. The Supreme Magistrates should enact Laws against *Immoralities and Profaness*; and all in Power must execute the established Penalties *impartially*, and conscientiously.

MINISTERS are appointed by Reproof, Threatnings, Instructions, and Censures to diswade from all Iniquities, and prevent them what they can; and a *Woe* is denounced expresly against such as omit this, *Ezek.* 33. 6. It were easie to prove that *Masters* are to restrain Impiety and Vice in their *Servants*, and that it's incumbent on *Parents* to use all diligence to subdue Transgressions, and encourage Vertue in their *Children*.

THIS Charge is so evident, that one would think a claim to Honour and Duty as by Divine Appointment, were disingenious in any in these Superiour Rela-

Relations, who disregard that *Reforming Work*, for which God appointed the said Honour and Authority——Nor is it any Wonder that Providence oft permits the Inferiour Correlates to despise and disobey them who are over them, when Superiors suffer Vice in them to go unrestrained.

BUT the Obligation of such Superiors to Reforming Work, is too obvious to insist on; the Scruple may appear greater among Equals, and such may be ready to excuse themselves by saying, *I am a Private Man, without Power over my Neighbour, and therefore free from all Obligations to endeavour their Reformation.* To such *I answer*, Either Reforming others is not Christ's Interest, or thou according to thy Station, art obliged to do it; and thou mayest innocently obstruct the Amendment of others, or it's thy Duty to promote their Amendment: For the Text is thus extended, *Whoever is not for me, is against me, and who gathers not with me, scatters abroad.*

TRUE, The Magistrate's Sword is not thine to do execution thy self, but Christ by the Magistrate calls to thee,

as

as Exod. 32. 20. *Who is on the Lord's ſide, let him come unto me.* It is the recorded Fault of the Common People, as well as of others, *None calleth for Juſtice* againſt Atrocious Criminals, *Iſa.* 59. 4. and you may as well ſay, None except the Magiſtrate, ſhould *help* to apprehend the flying Murtherer; as that no other ſhould aſſiſt to Convict the Drunkard, Fornicator, Sabbath-profaner, and Blaſphemer. If there were no *Laws* to puniſh theſe Offenders, thy private ſeaſonable Reproof, and forbearing their Company, would be thy laſt Relief.

BUT when there be Laws againſt ſuch; nay, when the Laws expreſly *encourage* Private Mens Proſecution of ſuch, what can be pretended to exempt you from doing ſo ſmall a thing as *informing* againſt Tranſgreſſors, that they may be reclaimed, and the *Land acquitted* by their Puniſhment?

THE ſame Providence that led thee to behold that Offence, (if private Reproof recover not the Delinquent) dictates to thee, thou art that Perſon deſigned to embitter his Sin to him by Publick

Publick Puniſhment, and ſo prevent the Contagion by his indulged Example.

The Ends of good Laws are fruſtrated, if private Men muſt not Convict Offenders; for what great uſe are our Laws againſt Vitious Practices and Profaneneſs, if Multitudes may offend, and none be Puniſhed, unleſs that they perpetrate their Villanies in the ſight of ſome Zealous Magiſtrates, which are not many? Moreover, the Obligation of Private Perſons to reſtrain Sin as they are able, doth reſult from that Duty of Love you all owe to your Neighbours, Lev. 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart; thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy Neighbour, and not ſuffer Sin upon him.* Thy Neighbours Amendment is the End, rebuking him is the Means: ——But what is meant by this *Rebuking?* No leſs than that juſt Severity which is ſufficient to reclaim him be uſed, when gentle Reproof hath been tried in vain: ——For you may as well ſay, to reprove him by *Word* is no Duty, if you may ſtop at that, when you can lawfully bring him under Methods *more ſevere.*

For to rebuke him includes the *laſt* as well as the former:——Nor is it leſs hatred to deny him the help of Legal Puniſhments, to affright him from 'em, than to grudge him the aſſiſtance of a few words of thine own.

BUT to iſſue this Point. I put it to your Conſciences, is not every Private Perſon obliged to do all which he hath both *Right* and *Ability* to do, for the dethroning of Satan, advancing of Chriſt, ſerving his Country, and ſaving his Neighbour? Will any Man deny this? ——Now Reforming others by judicially proſecuting the Flagitious, tend to theſe good Ends, and that the meaneſt among you have a Right and Ability to Convict ſuch Criminals, which is a fit means to the *Reformation*, you cannot pretend: What Pretence than will the obſcurity of your Condition yield againſt the convicting them, being your Duty, as well as others, eſpecially when any Man's giving Teſtimony for Conviction, is but as a Private Man, and the Law authorizes you therein, as much as if you were a Magiſtrate; therefore you are as much obliged to Witneſs, as any Magi-

Magiſtrate: And you have no Plea againſt engaging herein, but what might command a Bluſh; for he that *pondereth the Heart* ſees, and will force your ſelves to own, that you omit it, becauſe you ſecretly favour Satan's Empire againſt Chriſt, you make a light account of the evil and danger of theſe Sins, you are under a Curſed Indifferency for Chriſt's Intereſt, and prefer your Gain, Eaſe, and Safety above them: Nay, you hate your Brother, and are well content, that *Satan*'s depraving and deſtructive ways ſhould abide and prevail.

THEREFORE lay by your Excuſes, and ſay no more, *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* Why ſhould I intermeddle?

4 *Prop.* EVERY Faithful Chriſtian, and Follower of Chriſt, muſt and will ſubſerve *Chriſt* in the *Work of Reformation.*

MY Text will bear this Connexion, *He that is for me, will gather with me:* If any Man be truly devoted to me as his Head and Leader, he will concur with me in promoting Religion, Truth, Righteouſneſs, Temperance, and Purity, upon the Ruines of Irreligion, Profaneneſs, Falſhood, Injuſtice, Drunkenneſs,

and Debaucheries. And, my Friends, this is ſo far from Contingency, that there is a neceſſity, and a certain futurity of it from the very Conſtitution and Eſſentials of a true Chriſtian, even ſuch, that he cannot be a *Chriſtian* indeed, who ſtatedly, and altogether omits it.

For, 1. *IT is implied in our Dedication to Chriſt.* We become Chriſtians by our Dedication to the Lord Jeſus, and that Dedication can amount to no leſs than that we do renounce the World, Fleſh and Devil, and will fight under Chriſt's Banner, and ſtand by his Cauſe and Intereſts againſt *Satan* and his Uſurpations, which interpretatively is not only, that the Devil and the Fleſh ſhall not govern me in particular, but that as far as I am able, they ſhall govern no other Perſon; they ſhall have no place whence I can expel them, I'll adhere to Chriſt, and vigorouſly follow him in all juſt Attempts for their Reſtraint and Extirpation.

YOU wear a Chriſtian Name, and you own that you yeilded up your ſelves unto the Lord Chriſt by Covenant-engagement: How then is it poſſible, if your Hearts

Hearts were right, to hear his Name Blaſphemed, ſee his Day Unhallowed, his Laws trampled on, and what he came to deſtroy, maintained with defiance, and you connive at Mens doing it without controul, when you have the happy advantage of *good Laws* to put a ſtop thereto.

TO reconcile this to *Chriſtianity*, you muſt reckon that Profaneſs and Sacriledge are *part* of your *Chriſtian Vow*; or that *Hypocriſie* in vowing is allowable, or elſe that in giving up your ſelves to Chriſt, you *truly intended* no more than what may be thus expreſſed. Oh thou my Saviour! To thee I yield up my ſelf, that by thee I may *get* Safety, and Life Eternal; but I am not ſo much as to offend a wicked Neighbour, or at all to expoſe my ſelf in reſiſting *thy* Enemies, avouching *thy* Intereſts, or pleading *thy* Cauſe: I muſt be *exempted* from all Labour, Expence, and Hazard, in following thee as my Leader; I will be *Neutral* in thy Undertaking to reform the *World*, and excepted from purſuing that Deſign. *With theſe Limitations*, I'm content to give up my ſelf to thee, this is all I

mean by my *Chriſtian Dedication*, and if therein thou inſiſteſt upon more Service on my part, I diſavow and *renounce* that Dedication, and ſhall ſhew that I do ſo by my indifferency and neglect, whenever thou putteſt me on helping forwards *the Work of Reformation.*

WHATEVER you may fancy, thus muſt your *Fœderal* Tranſactings with Chriſt be interpreted, if you eſteem your ſelves *unobliged* to reſtrain other Mens Oaths and Enormities.

BUT how are you impoſed on by *Satan* and your own Carnal Minds, if you can imagine that this is to be *Baptized in (or into) the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, Matth. 28. 19. or that *a good Conſcience anſwers* to no other Demands in *that Baptiſm which ſaveth*, 1 Pet. 3. 21. Read the *Goſpel* again, and you'll ſoon find it Condemneth ſuch a heartleſs and *deceitful* ſenſe of devotedneſs to Chriſt, a ſenſe which every *Gracious* Soul muſt abhor; yea, common Ingenuity will deteſt, as Ungrateful and Baſe, and too mean for a *Chriſtian* to offer, or a Bleſſed Redeemer to accept. Every real Saint will reckon himſelf

ſelf *ſeparated* to Chriſt, and that Chriſt hath thereupon an abſolute *Propriety* in him, and that it's by the utmoſt *Services* this Propriety is to be acknowledg'd; his Language is *the God whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve*, Act. 27. 23. *To me to live is Chriſt*, Phil. 1. 21.

2. *A Regenerate Nature impels* a Chriſtian to further the Work of Reformation.

EVERY true Chriſtian is *partaker of the Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. by this he is denominated the Regenerate *Seed* of Chriſt, becauſe he is in a degree truly conformed to Chriſt in his Temper and Inclinations, and thence he loveth and abhorreth things correſpondently to what Chriſt doth: Upon which very account the reforming deſigns of Chriſt are *lovely* to the Genuine Chriſtian, and all daring wickedneſs is *deteſted* by him; yea, a Zeal for the reſtraint of Sin, and for promoting Holineſs, is become his *Natural Inſtinct*; and therefore he ſuffers in the Criminal Exorbitancies he beholds, and muſt offer a violence to himſelf when he teſtifieth not his diſlike againſt open Wickedneſs, as well as his

approbation of what's virtuous and becoming.

HOW impoſſible then muſt it be to ſuch a Man to have a proſpect of Reforming the flagitious and a certainty of reſtraining their open and daring Villanies, and yet neglect the means which are in his Hand to effect theſe things?

YOU muſt ſuppoſe the Judgment, Conſcience, Will and Affections of this Man altogether unactive; nay, himſelf to move ſtatedly againſt his ſtrongeſt biaſs, and Divine Influences to yield, nor excite any Holy Propenſions, if Sloath, or Carnality can reconcile him to indulge what he ſo abominates, and to neglect what his Heart is ſo intenſly bent for.

MOREOVER, you muſt conclude this Man to pray in a deceitful manner, and to counter-act his own Petitions, for he daily prayeth, *Thy Name be Sanctified*, and yet ſuffers it to be Blaſphemed: *Thy Kingdom come*, and yet countenanceth Rebellion: *Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven*, and yet conniveth at the daring violation of God's plain Commandments, and is content

tent the Earth ſhall be an Emblem of *Hell* for Villany, *Matth.* 6. 10.

A good Man from the inſtinct of a Holy Nature ſaith, *Rivers of Water run down mine Eyes, becauſe they keep not thy Laws*, Pſ. 119. 136. And is it poſſible he ſhould refuſe Labour and Expence to eaſe himſelf of what he thus heartily complains. What coſts him Floods of Tears when he cannot prevent it, muſt force his utmoſt endeavours to ſubdue it.

WHENEVER you determine that a Regenerate Perſon may neglect to help forwards the Work of Reformation, you muſt account him to fruſtrate his greateſt hopes, which are, That there ſhall be *a new Heaven, and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs*, 2 Pet. 3. 13. He muſt be reckon'd free from the impreſs that *every Nature* is under the power of, *viz.* an abhorrence againſt what is deſtructive to it, and an aptneſs to propagate it ſelf.

3. *THE Reforming of the World is one great deſign of Chriſt's Diſcipling and gathering Men into his Kingdom.*

THIS

THIS is the Charge they receive, this is a great part of their Truſt, and they muſt be treacherous to him, and unfaithful to that Truſt, if they omit to enlighten, cleanſe, and reform the World to the utmoſt of their Capacity. Chriſt as the Head of the Humane Nature, is engaged in a War againſt the Devil, to reſcue Sinners out of his Power, *to divide the Spoil*, Iſa. 53. 12.

HE might have employed Angels alone in this Conteſt; but he will put an Honour upon ſinful Men alſo in the Affair. He could have furniſhed all the Men he employ'd, with the Dignity, Force, and Authority of *Princes*; but for the generality he makes uſe of a few mean ordinary Perſons, that *Satan*'s Defeat, tho aſſiſted with the Scepters of moſt Kings, might be more *tormenting* to the Devil, and more *Honourable* to Chriſt. Of this number aſſiſting Chriſt in this War is every real Chriſtian reckoned, and upon his efficacious Call, he *enrolls* them his Subjects, and by making them Chriſtians, he liſts them *Soldiers*; not only to fight their *own* way to Heaven, but to aſſiſt Chriſt's Cauſe, and extend

tend his Conqueſts *as far* as they are able, 2 *Tim.* 2. 4.

VERY often they bear their Teſtimony for Chriſt, by *enduring only a Fight of Afflictions*, Heb. 10. 32. and thus overcome by *Dying*, *Rev.* 12. 11. The more qualified among them defend the Faith by *Arguments* as well as by Sufferings, 1 *Tim.* 6. 12. 2 *Tim.* 4. 7. But the ſummary Truſt of each Chriſtian, and at all times, and by all due ways, is no leſs than this, *viz.* That in defence of the Laws of Chriſt, they *ſtrive againſt Sin*, Heb. 12. 4. (which muſt oft be other Mens Sins, or their Blood had not been in apparent danger to be ſhed for ſtriving againſt them.) And that with the Doctrine of Chriſt, they promote Piety, and Virtue, which that Doctrine fails not to produce, where-ever it is ſincerely received.

AT ſome Seaſons Chriſt gives an advantage to his Followers, by wholſome Laws, and Godly Magiſtrates——And when it's ſo, can you think their own ſafety ſuſpends their Truſt? Or that he who was to *die a Martyr*, for teſtifying againſt Sin, muſt not oppoſe Sin by endeavour-

deavouring to put thoſe Laws in execution which are enacted againſt it, ſuch a ſuppoſition argues their *Quiet* is dangerous to the Church in a worſe ſenſe than it hath been as yet accounted, *viz.* that it relaxeth all Obligations on *private* Chriſtians to endeavour faithfully the Worlds Amendment.

THEY that govern themſelves by this Notion, would ſcarce have been Martyrs for any concern of Chriſt in a Day of Suffering; for if Idleneſs, or a Scoff be enough to deter from *reſiſting* Sin, ſurely a Flame, a Gibbet, or loſs of Eſtate would prove ſufficient to make them *commit* thoſe Sins, and *Condemn* all Holineſs.

HAD former *Martyrs* lived in our Days, that Zeal which governed them to *die* for Chriſt's Truths, and Laws, muſt have compelled them now to *act* vigorouſly for his Laws, and never ceaſe to adore that Grace which afforded them the Protection and Aſſiſtance of Magiſtrates in ſo acting for Chriſt againſt Sin and Satan.

PUT theſe *three Heads* together, and judge whether he deſerves a Chriſtian Name,

Name, who will not engage on Chriſt's ſide to reform the Nation, and whether there be any danger that a *true Iſraelite* can refuſe it, unleſs his *Dedication* prove a nullity, his *Regenerate Principle* looſe its power, and the *deſign* of his Chriſtian Calling be diſappointed?

APPLICATION.

Infer. 1. REAL Chriſtians are united in the greateſt things.

THEY are for Chriſt and his Intereſts, againſt Satan and Sin, in the bent of their Hearts and ſcope of their Lives, *To me to live is Chriſt*, hath their joynt conſent, *Phil.* 1. 21.

HIS Kingdom they endeavour to advance, his Royalties they would maintain, and what oppugnes him they would overthrow, they would make the World wiſer and better, and ſet all Men free from Satan's Empire, which is upheld by, and expreſſed in the Dominion of Mens Luſts.

UNION in theſe great things may well conſiſt with *difference* in leſs conſiderable Matters, and is more Chriſtian and

and of higher conſequence than Agreement in many diſputed *Notions*, or accord in a *Ceremony*.

HOW mean a thing and unprofitable is it to be of one Faction, or Party; yea, or Communion among *Proteſtants*, compared herewith? Let Men agree in *theſe* never ſo much, they are departed from Chriſt, and *Carnally* joined together, if they are divided in a reſolvedneſs to reform the Nation.

AND what a pity is it, that they who are joined in Chriſt this Head, and in this his Intereſt and Deſign, ſhould be diſunited in leſſer things, eſpecially to mutual Hatred and Detractations?

AND more is it to be bewailed that any Perſons who honeſtly aim at the promoting of Chriſt's Intereſts, and oppoſing of Sin, ſhould by miſtakes and temptation at any times be *employed by the Devil* in ſerving his Purpoſes, and diſſerving Chriſt, which too too often happens, and ought to caution the moſt *confident* to try their own *Spirits*, and examine their Proceedings, eſpecially when vehement: *Ye know not what manner*

of

of Spirit ye are of, was a Charge againſt better Men than us, *Luke* 9. 55.

Infer. 2. *ENCOURAGEMENTS* in promoting Reformation Work, are very great, notwithſtanding the greatneſs of the *Difficulties*.

DIFFICULTIES I know are apt to deter from *beginning*, and to diſcourage you from *proceeding* in this Work, tho Honourable; and he is unthoughtful who acknowledgeth not the Difficulties to be great. Great are the ſtruggles of *Corrupt Nature*; violent, unwearied, and various is the oppoſition of *Satan*, that we may ſay as St. *Paul*, *We fight not againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities and Powers*, Eph. 6. 12.

IN our Land *Cuſtom* hath heightened the Torrent of Profaneſs and Irreligion, and makes feeble means incapable to put a ſtop thereto.

GREATNESS and Multitude ſtill too much ſupport theſe, as former Authority for unworthy Deſigns, had a great hand in introducing and making them faſhionable.

BUT after all, if your *Eyes were open*, you would perceive that *more are for*

you,

you, than can be againſt you; and the ground for Courage much exceeds that of Deſpondency. For this end review a little.

1. *WHO* he is that you are for, and with you.

2. *WHAT* you are ſtriving for, and againſt.

3. *WHOM* you have to oppoſe and fight againſt you.

4. WHAT preſent Advantages in this Work you have at this time.

I. WHOM you are for, and is with you.

MY Text tells you it is *for Chriſt*; he is your Head, to whom *the Kingdom is given*, and who is *far above Principalities and Powers*, Eph. 1. 21, 22. You have him for your *Leader*, who hath the ſecurity of Heaven, that he ſhall *Reign and Overcome*, Rev. 17. 14. and *of whoſe Kingdom there ſhall be no end*, Dan. 7. 14. In the Fight you are ſure to proſper in the *proper* Seaſon, which if delayed, he will alike own and reward your Faithful Endeavours, as if your Succeſs were greateſt.

CAUSE

CAUSE of fear in this Enterprize you have none, when he can protect you in the utmoſt danger, and hath a Right to admit you into his Heavenly Kingdom when your Work is over, both which he will infallibly do, for *he hath the Keys of* David, *Rev.* 3.7.

GO on then, for no Faithful Followers can ever be *aſhamed* of this General; nor will he be aſhamed of ſuch. His Eye is ſtill upon you, and his Preſence ever with you, to renew your *ſtrength* and afford *Supports*. *Angels* think this Employment for him to be their Honour, *Rev.* 22.9. And can you diſdain it? Millions of *Martyrs* have eſteemed his Service *ſafe*, even when they *Suffered*, and how can you be afraid?

YOU are for him who is *the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh*, able to alter Tempers, and change Mens Minds. Yea, can command unexpected *Succeſs* to the pooreſt Inſtruments.

II. CONSIDER what you are ſtriving for, and againſt what.

'TIS *for what* God, and Angels, and all Good Men approve; yea, it's for the Intereſt of CHRIST on Earth:

Things, that when they prevail, will make Mankind happy? And they are what ſhall moſt certainly prevail againſt the utmoſt oppoſition of Earth and Hell; what you attempt to advance, will juſtifie the greateſt Expence, Labour and Hazards.

BUT againſt what do you contend? It's againſt *Profaneſs and Debauchery*; not things *good*, nay, not *diſputable*, or *indifferent*; but ſo plainly *evil*, that the moſt brutiſh would *bluſh* to plead for; it's againſt the *Reproach* and *Leproſie* of Humane Nature, the *Cauſes* of our paſt Calamities, and what can alone *endanger* the Nation for the future: Theſe Sins, themſelves are the *ſoreſt Plagues*. It's Vice you would extirpate, which makes its Abettors *Cowardly*: It's what *Reaſon*, as well as Revelation, teſtifies againſt, it's what few Sinners like in their own Children: Who would not be encouraged to reduce and remove ſuch?

2. *WHOM* you have to oppoſe and fight againſt you in this Enterprize of Reformation.

ITS the *Devil*, and ſuch as he doth actuate, who will reſiſt you; he is the grand Leader,

Leader, and they his Inſtruments—— And even himſelf is *caſt into Chains* by the Great God, 2 *Pet.* 2. 4. your Leader hath trampled on him in the *Upper Regions*, Col. 2. 15. he hath in a great meaſure prevailed againſt him in *the Earth* already, and will ſhortly chain him up from his *wonted Influences* here below, *Rev.* 20. 3. yea, at laſt he will entirely baffle, break him, and put him beyond any *further Attempts*, *Rev.* 20. 10.

TAKE Courage, it's againſt one who is an *Uſurper*, and whom his moſt Obſequious Followers are *aſhamed* to own, and *afraid* to ſee.

IN a word, greater, ſtronger, wiſer, and better is he that leads you in this Work, than he whom the World follows in oppoſing Reformation.

AND as for the *Men* who engage againſt the attempt of ſuppreſſing Vice, they can be none but the *Inconſiderate* part even of *Brutal* Perſons; and as they are at this Day *reſtrained* by Laws from doing you much open Injury, ſo their own Conſciences will ſoon approve your Attempts to better them, they'll

judge them very kind if they ſhall reform, and as highly juſt when they have ſinned away the Seaſon of Amendment.

IV. YOU have very encouraging Advantages at this juncture.

THE *Parliaments* Addreſs, and the *King's* Proclamation thereupon, with a proſpect of more *Laws* purſuant thereto, are *great* things, and *good* ſigns; the moſt hopeful Indications *England* for many Years affordeth: You engage againſt Evils which the *Supream Authority* in all its *Conſtituent* parts, have teſtified againſt; Magiſtracy is engaged and joyned to aſſiſt you; nay, it's no other than the Execution of many *Excellent Laws* which you ſubſerve.

THE Number of your *Societies* are multiplying in the *Country*, yea, your Example is imitated in *Ireland* with greater ſucceſs than here; the main of your *Difficulty* is over, and ſignal *Succeſſes* have attended you; many Prayers are on your ſide, and *Inviſible Powers* concerned with you. By many ſuch things *Heaven* ſmileth on this Work, and can you faint without the greateſt Reproach?

Exhort. LET me therefore *Excite* and *Injoyn you to proceed vigorously in this Glorious Attempt.*

I have proved it your *Duty* past all Dispute, that ought to remove your Backwardness and Sloath. I have shewn you somewhat of your *Encouragements*, let that allay all *fear*. Need I tell you? You are hereby endeavouring but due *Returns* from *England* for its Eminent Deliverance from extreamest Miseries, and those unavoidable to Humane View.

YOU are *preventing* those Calamities which will return with Aggravations, if these Evils be not Reformed, *Ezra* 9. 13, 14.

YOU are providing the surest way to revive our *Trade*, prolong our *Peace*, and recover *England*'s Glory. If you succeed, Bodies and Minds will be freed from the sad Effects of the Debaucheries, which are as fatal as apparent.

YOU lay the best Foundation for *Peace* among the Divided Parties in this Nation, who will when *Vertuous*, easily coalesce, and be free to take away all *unnecessary* Causes of Division.

YOUR very Meeting together, and joynt Concurrence in this laudable Employment, will *Conciliate* your Minds, and melt them down into *Moderation*, which is a Temper so necessary, and upon which our Happiness so much depends, that I *dare* deliver this Prognostick: England *can never be fixedly happy in its Religious, or Civil Concernments, but by an* UNION *between the Moderate Churchmen, and the Moderate Dissenters.*

YOU befriend your own *Children* and Posterity, by preventing the Infection that may ruine them.

MANY other Arguments might be urged——Oh that these and all others made use of by the several *Reverend Ministers in both Places* of your Meetings, may by the Blessing of God envigorate your Minds in this Attempt, and dispose *Transgressors* to submit thereto.

AND surely whatever is a Motive to the *Physitian* to endeavour the Cure, is much more forcible with the *Diseased* to admit it: Is endeavouring the Reforming of you Oh Sinners! So plainly the Duty of this *Society*, and worth their utmost Pains and Charge: And can it

be

be a light thing, whether *you* will be Reformed, or no? Oh the *Teſtimony* againſt you that ſhall ariſe from hence, if you be ſtill uncleanſed!

Some CAUTIONS.

I ſhall give a few Cautions.

1. WITH reſpect to the *Preliminaries to, and the firſt Words of my Text.*

STATE not *Chriſt's* Deſigns which you propoſe to ſerve by your *haſty Fancy*, but *his* own plain adjuſtment of them; you are not for Chriſt by eſpouſing an *Error*; you act not with, or for him in oppoſing what he *forbids not*, or violently contending for what is *indifferent*, trivial, or doubtful; his Kingdoms Concernment lies in what is *commanded*, *plain*, and *momentous*.

AND therefore let your Endeavours be laid out in proportion to the evidence his *Word* gives concerning things, and tho it be too unuſual, yet be you as earneſt for what is important, and *plainly* commanded, and *againſt* what is flagitious and *plainly* Prohibited, as others are apt to be for trifles of *their own* invent-

ing, or againſt Sins of their own making.

AND withal, be *afraid*, without higheſt *Scripture Evidence* well applied, to judge any Men, or Party of *Proteſtants*, to be *for* or *againſt Chriſt*, in contradiſtinction from others: It would make a Tender Heart to bleed to hear *two Extremes* apply that one Text againſt Men of a *duer* Temper, *How long halt ye between two Opinions? If God be God follow him, but if* Baal, *follow him*, 1 King. 18. 22. when more *Charity* would better evidence either ſide to be the Followers of *Chriſt*.

2. TO *you the Members of the Societies, with reſpect to your Undertaking.*

THINK not lightly as to your ſelves of ſuch Sins as fall not under the edge of the *Magiſtrate's Sword*: For tho they are not ſo hurtful to *Humane Societies*, and therefore not ſo provided againſt by the Law of Man, yet they are as contrary to *Chriſtianity*, and inconſiſtent with it, as others be. *Brutal* Sins are chiefly thoſe you have the Law on your ſide to puniſh: But be you alike watchful againſt *Deviliſh* Sins, ſuch as Malice, Envy, Pride,

Pride, Rancour, Lying, *&c.* Guard alſo againſt Infidelity, Hypocriſie, Carnal-Selfiſhneſs, and all Impurity of Heart; which with the like Sins God *reſerves* for Puniſhment in endleſs Flames.

WATCH ſtrictly that no Scandalous Practices of *your own*, blemiſh, or obſtruct your Undertaking; for you will be more obſerved than others, and your Faults will induce a Charge of Hypocriſie upon all active Inſtruments, tho never ſo ſincere.

LET not your Endeavours be blaſted by any *appearance* of Pragmaticalneſs, Oſtentation, Folly, Rage, Vanity, making a Sport of Sin, Revenge, or Partiality:——But contrive things ſo, that the *Puniſhed* may be forced to confeſs, It's Zeal for God, and Love to them which entirely govern you in this Attempt.

TAKE care that your Ends, and the Principle you act from, be approved by the *Heart-ſearching God*; that ſo you may not looſe your Reward, nor forfeit his Defence: And know, it's poſſible for *Carnal-Selfiſhneſs* to be the Spring of Actions

Actions advanced to the height of these, tho so very excellent.

Go not out of your own Station, neither use any unjustifiable means, least you prove *Snares* to others, or your selves, instead of Reformers.

BE tender of your Neighbour's Reputation, and therefore publish no Man's Faults, unless it be before the Magistrate in order to Civil Punishments; or before Persons authorized to inflict Church Censures: *Reproachful Railing* was never ordained by God, or Man, to be a Reforming Means: And he who chargeth you *to speak not evil of one another*, Jam. 4. 11. *Yea, of no Man*, Tit. 3. 2. will require at your Hands all that obstructed Service, and all afflictive Dammage occasioned by your Reproachful Language.

ATTEMPT to Convict no Man of Punishable Crimes, where your *Proof* is not *full* and *evident*; for thereby you'll discover your own Folly, and Uncharitableness, baffle your great Design, expose your Neighbour to Suspicion, and your selves to Danger.

BEGIN

BEGIN not with Severeſt Methods, where you hope milder will prevail; for it's not *Cruelty*, but *Reformation* is your Honeſt Aim; and the laſt is *beſt* attained, when the leaſt of the firſt is needful.

ADMIT nothing to *excuſe* your Vigorous Care to reſtrain Sin, which will not bear your *Dying* Thought, in a view of God's *Tribunal*.

LET nothing *below* or *beſides* Reformation, be your Deſign, and yet be not ſatisfied with the meer Honeſty of your *Intention*, but uſe the beſt and juſteſt ways which a well informed Mind directs, as likelieſt to reach that End.

TRUST not in your *own Heart*, nor reckon Succeſs to be at *your* own Beck, but depend on, and *Pray* much to God for his Conduct, Defence, and Bleſſing.

LIMIT not your Reſolution to perſiſt in this Bleſſed Attempt by the *continued Aſſiſtance of others*; for many now Vigorous, may cool in time, but your *Obligation* will not ceaſe by their *Backſlidings*.

REPENT

REPENT not of beginning this Attempt, if you ſhould meet with *leſs Succeſs*, and *more Trouble* than you at firſt expected: For it was not well *conſidered*, if you did not count your Coſts; and your Undertaking may be well managed *on your part*, tho great Succeſs be wanting. But however, *unexpected* Trouble will not leſſen Duty, nor Diſappointment as to expected Succeſs, hinder *your Reward*; nor will *other* Men's Faultineſs be charged on you.

ALLOW not your Spirits to grow *Luke-warm* and *remiſs* in this Work; when you have for ſome time applied your ſelves to it, and attained ſome *degree* of *Reformation* thereby. There is need of this *Caution*, on theſe ſeveral Accounts. Your Endeavours will be faint, proportionably to the Remiſſneſs of your *Spirit*: Time is apt to allay that Fervour, which in the *beginning* of an Enterprize is more common and Natural; the need of Reforming Methods will *continue*, tho you ſhould find ſome Reformation as to open Impieties, for many Defilements will *abide* unclean-

ſed;

ſed; *Corrupt Nature* will ſoon diſcover it ſelf, when Reſtraint diminiſhes, and the *more* violently, becauſe a while kept in.

SET no bounds to the Reformation you propoſe, *ſhort* of what the *Laws* of the Land do countenance.

WHATEVER Evils they remark, do not you connive at, tho they appear not *ſo groſs* as thoſe you at firſt encounter. It's Wiſdom in a very Degenerate Nation, *to begin* with the *greateſt* Crimes:——But it will be Unfaithfulneſs, when theſe are ſomewhat amended, to overlook *the Leſſer*; for they are *Evils*, and will, if indulged, diſpoſe Men to return to ſuch as are more *Atrcious*.

WISELY *prevent* all Diviſions, Quarrels, and Siniſter Dealings in your *own Societies*. Should you be uneaſie to each other, your *Strength* is broken, and the leaſt injuſtice will ſully your *Reputation*, which is ſo abſolutely neceſſary to your Uſefulneſs. The Reaſon why I caution you againſt *Diviſions*, is this: It too often happens, that forwardneſs in ſuch Attempts proceeds from a *Natural Fervour*,

vour, as well as a *pure* Heavenly Zeal; and as far as this *Natural Fire* is active, Provoking Insolence, and Indiscretion, are *hardly* with the greatest Care prevented, and what tendency the discovery of these have to Quarrels and Disgusts, is too obvious to insist on.

HAPPILY would this Work be carried on, if a Divine Zeal in *Sedate* Tempers *directs* it, and every one shall *bear* as much with each other's Weakness, as he would in a *Profitable* Concern of his *own*. As to that part of the Caution which relates to *Sinister Dealings*, I have no ground to suggest it, but that the Holiest Society here, may have a *Judas*, and whilst our Nature is not wholly healed, we should be warned against *Satan's Devices*.

Lastly, TAKE heed that your *Societies Degenerate not*, nor be made to serve lower, or other Purposes, than this of the *Reformation of Manners*. *Earthly* Minds may *debase* their use, and *Designing* Men endeavour to *pervert* them. They now are *duly* managed to Ends for which they deserve this *Glorious Name*: Oh let that Name *ever* govern all

all your Diſcourſes, Deſigns, and Methods. He too little knows Mankind, and the Hiſtory of former Times, that thinks this very Caution needleſs.

THE Lord impreſs theſe *Warnings* which Faithfulneſs to Chriſt, and a great Eſteem of your Undertaking, compelled me to deliver.

I ſhall *conclude* the whole by calling you *to Lament* with me; that the City and Nation ſo *hate* to be Reformed, that they who ſeriouſly attempt it, muſt bear the *Scoffs* of *moſt*; and to be an *Informer* againſt the obſtinately Vicious, is with them a reproachful *Title*, tho God records it for a *Commendation* to Men of higheſt rank, *v.*9 12.

LET's Bewail; That after all God's *long* uſe of all Reforming Methods, we ſhould ſtill have ſo *much need* to be Reformed. That *Text*, Ezek. 22. 24. is applicable to us; *Say unto her, Thou art the Land that is not cleanſed.* And when we conſider that the Peſtilence, the Burning this City, the Sword, loſs of Trade, growing Poverty, and above all, the Goſpel Means of Grace have been

been all so *notoriously* uneffectual to Reclaim us, have we not great cause to pray that God pass not that *Sentence against us*, which you find uttered by this same Prophet? Cap. 24. 13. *In thy Filthiness is Lewdness, because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged; thou shalt not be purged from thy Filthiness any more, till I have caused my Fury to rest upon thee.*

FINIS.

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A Sermon Preach'd to the *Societies for the Reformation of Manners*, in the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, Novemb. 15. 1697. By *John Shower*, Octavo.

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